

# Pacheco

## State Park



### Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at (209) 826-6283. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting:

#### **CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

**P. O. Box 942896**

**Sacramento, CA 94296-0001**

For information call: (800) 777-0369

(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.

711, TTY relay service

[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

Discover the many states of California.™

#### **Pacheco State Park**

**38787 Dinosaur Point Road**

**Hollister, CA 95023**

**(209) 826-6283**

*Pacheco's many  
small lakes, ponds and  
streams provide remote  
and charming spots to rest,  
water horses or enjoy  
a picnic.*

**E**xplosions of colorful wildflowers, incredible vistas from rolling hills, secluded meadows—these are all part of vibrant Pacheco State Park. The last remaining portion of an old Mexican land grant, El Rancho San Luis Gonzaga, the 6,890 acres of this state park are rich with wildlife and historic features.



*View spring wildflowers in April.*

The Pacheco area is semiarid. Summer temperatures range from 80 to 100 degrees, while winter brings a brisker 45 to 65 degrees. Evenings are cool all year due to coastal air currents moving across Pacheco Pass. Layered clothing is recommended.

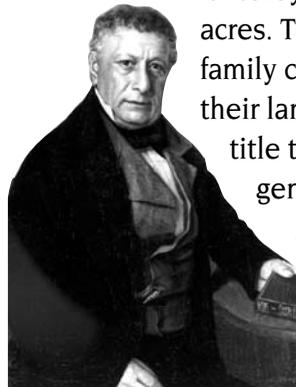
## **PARK HISTORY**

### **Native People**

Archaeological and ethnographic evidence indicate that Pacheco Pass was a borderland primarily inhabited by the Northern Valley Yokuts tribe and the Mutsun branch of Coastal Ohlone. Small, seasonal camps were common among these tribes, though larger villages, with more elaborate circular structures and semi-subterranean pit houses, could house about 200. The natives experienced large population losses as a result of Mexican incursions; they were almost destroyed by early American gold prospectors and settlers. Today, the tribes have reestablished their ancient roots and continue to reside in the region. Highway 152 along the park traces an old native trail running from the Central Valley to the coast.

### **The Pacheco Family**

The history of Pacheco State Park begins with its strategic location at the edge of the Diablo Range, providing a crucial transportation link between the Pacific coast and California's Central Valley. In 1806 Gabriel Moraga and Father Pedro Muñoz traversed the pass during the first documented European expedition. Pacheco State Park was originally part of El Rancho San Luis Gonzaga, a 50,000-acre Mexican land grant given in 1843 to Juan Pacheco, son of Francisco Pacheco, a Spanish soldier and wagon maker who came to California with nothing in 1821. By 1850, Pacheco, the wealthiest landowner in Monterey County, owned 150,000 acres. The flourishing Pacheco family continued to increase their land holdings and maintain title to their property for five generations.



*Francisco Pacheco*

Around 1844, Pacheco constructed the area's first adobe building near the location where Moraga and Muñoz had

camped nearly 40 years earlier. The new adobe house subsequently served as a stage stop, telegraph station, gambling hall and even a gas station and roadside café for travelers until 1962. Many roads have been built through the tranquil hills, including the original Pacheco Pass toll road, engineered by Andrew Firebaugh in 1856. The park came into existence through the dream of Paula Fatjo, the great-great granddaughter of Francisco Pacheco. After inheriting the land, Fatjo wanted her ranch to be safeguarded for those who shared her love for the animals and the beautiful, unspoiled land found here. In 1992, she donated the remaining 6,890 acres of Pacheco property to the State.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Natural Features**

Pacheco State Park is famed for its sweeping panoramas of mostly undeveloped grasslands and oak woodlands. Its location atop the Diablo Mountain Range provides impressive vistas in all directions. The 1,927-foot Spike's Peak offers a 360-degree view of San Luis Reservoir, the Central Valley, and the Coast Mountain Range. Grasslands, woodlands, ponds and natural springs provide seasonal interest. Summer and autumn grasses turn gold, while spring rains bring bursts of wildflower colors. Frequent strong winds have sculpted the old oaks into striking windswept forms.

## Plants and Animals

The park's native perennial grasses include one-sided bluegrass, purple needlegrass, and wild rye grasses. Carpeting the hills in spring are such wildflowers as butter-n-eggs, yellow violets, shooting star, popcorn flower, larkspur and California poppy.

A variety of wild animals calls the park home. Tule elk, deer, bobcats, coyotes and foxes roam the slopes while golden eagles and several species of hawks soar above the treetops. Cattle graze on the historic ranch in winter and spring, as they have done for more than 100 years.

## WIND TURBINE FARM

Silent, three-armed sentinels dot the hills of Pacheco State Park, providing clean energy for homes across the state. The eastern portion of the park is leased to a commercial venture that operates wind power plants and maintains turbines that generate enough electrical power for 3,500 homes. Call the park for tour information.



*School groups learn about wind energy.*

## ACTIVITIES

### TRAILS

Twenty-eight miles of trails offer several loop choices for visitors.

**Hiking**—Visitors are encouraged to hike the trails once traversed by many historical figures—including the Yokuts and Mutsun people, Spanish missionaries and soldiers, Mexican vaqueros, gold seekers and bandits.

**Biking**—All park trails currently allow bicycles and offer beginners and skilled riders a challenging and enjoyable ride over gentle slopes and steep hills.

**Equestrians**—Paula Fatjo donated the property to promote a love of horses and of undisturbed land. Scenic equestrian trails wind throughout the park, and several small lakes provide drinking water for the horses.

### SPECIAL EVENTS/PROGRAMS

Springtime guided walks highlight the park's fascinating history, and wildflower displays showcase its natural features. Kite Day is held each year. Call for dates and times.

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

We are working to improve accessibility throughout our parks; however, there are currently no wheelchair-accessible activities at this park. For updates, check <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.



*Kite Day activities*

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Henry W. Coe SP, about 45 miles northwest of Pacheco State Park. From Highway 101 in Morgan Hill, take the East Dunne Avenue exit and go east past Anderson Lake to the end of the county road. (408) 779-2728
- San Luis Reservoir SRA, 7 miles west of I-5 on Highway 152. From Highway 101, travel 33 miles east on 152 from Gilroy. (209) 826-1197

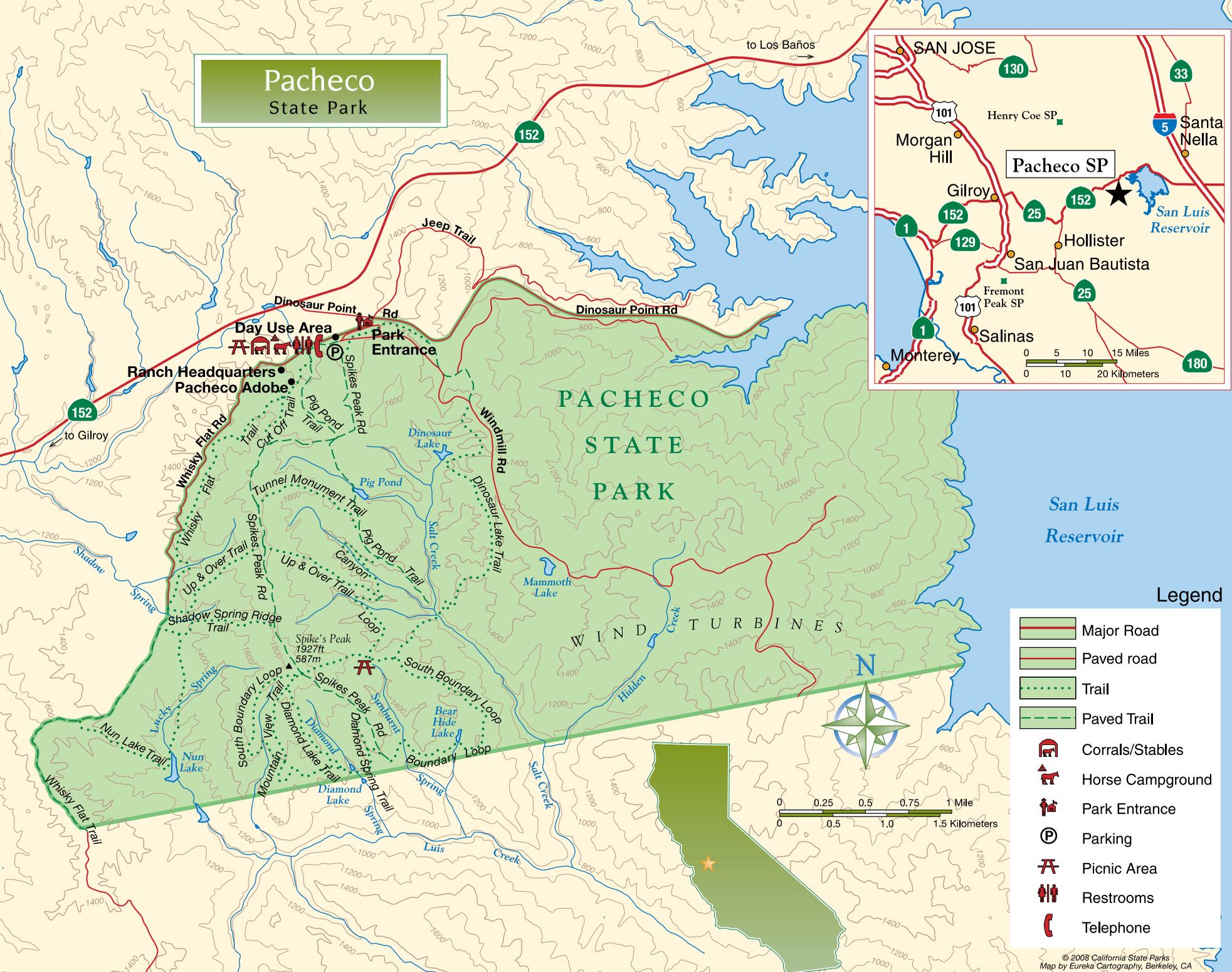
## PLEASE REMEMBER

**WARNING:** The western black-legged tick is common throughout California and is often found on the tips of grasses and shrubs. Rattlesnakes and poison oak are also present. Help preserve natural features and stay safe. Keep on marked trails and avoid contact with vegetation.

- The park's natural and cultural resources are protected by state law, and may not be removed or altered.
- Firearms and hunting are prohibited in state parks.
- Dogs are not allowed on the trails or in the backcountry of the park.
- Drinking water is not available in the park.

This park is supported in part by a nonprofit organization. For more information, contact Fatjo Corporation  
654 K Street, Los Banos, CA 93635  
(209) 826-4911

# Pacheco State Park



San Luis Reservoir

### Legend

-  Major Road
-  Paved road
-  Trail
-  Paved Trail
-  Corrals/Stables
-  Horse Campground
-  Park Entrance
-  Parking
-  Picnic Area
-  Restrooms
-  Telephone

